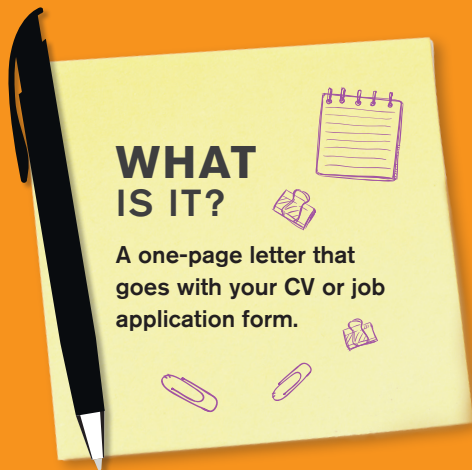




Quick Guide to A SUCCESSFUL COVERING LETTER



WHY WRITE ONE?

- To highlight to the recruiter why you are making an application, your motivation and enthusiasm for the job
- To draw attention to your most relevant skills and experience – this demonstrates you have done your research
- To show what you know about the recruiter
- To make the recruiter interested enough to take a look at your CV

WHAT TO INCLUDE?

- **THE FORMALITIES** – your address, the name and address of the organisation and the current date.
- **AN INTRODUCTION** – the name of the job to which you are applying and where you found the vacancy.
- **WHY YOU?** Use evidence of your skills, competencies and experience to demonstrate that you are the right fit for both the job and the organisation. Tailor your evidence to the requirements of the job description and person specification. Focus on the main criteria required for the role.
- **WHY THEM?** Articulate your key reasons for why you want to work for this organisation specifically and what interests you about the job. Demonstrate your motivation and highlight, if appropriate, how this fits with your career goals. Remember that the more passion you demonstrate for their organisation in particular, the greater the likelihood that they will be interested in you.
- **A CONCLUSION** – round it up with an expression of anticipation and interest in the interview process and remember to use the correct sign-off.

WHEN SHOULD I SEND ONE?

Always! Never send a CV or job application without one. It's both courteous and provides your contact details for the recruiter.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Keep it formal – use the correct modes of address ('Dear Sir/Madam' signs off 'Yours faithfully' and 'Dear Mrs Jones' with 'Yours sincerely').
- Wherever possible, always address it to a named person or at the very least a job title (eg, Dear Recruitment Manager). If in doubt, phone and ask who to address the letter to or use LinkedIn to help identify the person.
- Avoid jargon, clichés and unsupported claims.
- Write positively and enthusiastically.
- Check your letter carefully for inaccuracies, spelling mistakes or grammatical errors before you send it.
- If you're emailing your letter, save and send it as a PDF to retain the correct formatting.

FURTHER HELP

Access further information on our webpages:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/coverletters

Attend one of our Top Tips or Apply Yourself workshops:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/workshops

You can send your cover letter and other application documents to us and we'll aim to provide you with feedback within five working days – remember to tell us what you're applying for:
careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Have an upcoming interview?
Try our online interview practice tool or book a practice interview with an adviser:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/interview

PLAN YOUR COVER LETTER

Your cover letter should be designed to support your CV. It is your opportunity to show the reader what you have to bring to their role and why you want to work for them in particular.



EMPLOYER'S WISH LIST:

- Check person specification/ job description



Demonstrate genuine interest by writing a cover letter that connects the dots between your experience and the requirements of the position.

Forbes

Use the following questions to brainstorm ideas for your cover letter:

Who is the recipient of your application? (*Name, title*)

What internship/job role are you applying for?

How did you learn about the position?

(*Examples: Company website, Careers Network, through a contact*)

What are your related experiences? List your work, internship or volunteer roles, organisation membership, or coursework most similar to the role you are seeking.

What is your relevant supporting evidence? List your evidence from your related experiences that fit best with the employer's wish list.

What interests you most about this internship/job role?

Why would the role's tasks and responsibilities be a good fit for you?

As a potential employee, what interests you most about this organisation?
What distinguishes this organisation from others that do similar work?

Think about the person reading your cover letter.
What have they asked for?
What will interest and intrigue them?
What will they find impressive?
It's your job to give them what they want.



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